

# Sand Prairie Conservation Area

## Ten-Year Area Management Plan FY 2015-2024



  
Wildlife Division Chief

  
Date



## OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Sand Prairie Conservation Area, #200519
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 2005
- **Acreage:** 200 acres
- **County:** Scott
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**

### A. Strategic Direction

Maintain and enhance sand natural communities on the area; work to recover species of conservation concern; and provide interpretational and recreational opportunities that are compatible with the natural resources in the area.

### B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future landscape conditions at the Sand Prairie Conservation Area (CA) are sand grassland natural communities of high biological diversity with inclusions of scattered shrub oaks and hickories, with savanna-like qualities. Sand Prairie CA should be managed to maintain the natural communities present and to protect and enhance populations of species of conservation concern.

### C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

### I. Special Considerations

- A. **Priority Areas:** Sand Ridge Grasslands Conservation Opportunity Area, Swift Ditch Fisheries Priority Watershed
- B. **Natural Areas:** None

### II. Important Natural Features and Resources

- A. **Species of Conservation Concern:** Species of conservation concern are known from this area. Area Managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the Natural History Biologist.
- B. **Caves:** None
- C. **Springs:** None

### III. Existing Infrastructure

- 1 parking lot

**IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations**

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** None
- B. Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:** None
- D. Cultural Resources:** No known cultural resources.
- E. Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** None observed.
- F. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- G. Boundary Issues:** None

**MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

**V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations**

Management of Sand Prairie CA focuses on enhancing or maintaining the cover types and natural communities present on the areas. Sand Prairie CA is a grassland area with native floral and faunal components that are particularly rare for the state of Missouri. The intent of management on the area is to protect the sand grassland natural communities (including sand savanna and successional sand shrubland); maintain or increase populations of wildlife that utilize these rare habitat types; and promote the stability of populations of species of conservation concern in the area.

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Promoting diverse sand natural communities (sand grassland, sand savanna, sand shrubland and sand blows)
- 2) Monitoring, identifying and addressing invasive species infestations
- 3) Monitoring and working to recover populations of species of conservation concern

**Management Objective 1:** Promote diverse sand natural communities (sand grassland, sand savanna, sand shrubland and sand blows) utilizing management strategies to benefit species of conservation concern, small game, grassland birds and conservative floral components.

**Strategy 1:** Utilize prescription fire strategies to maintain rich grasslands and woody cover components; and to encourage species of conservation concern and specific plants and animals of interest.

**Strategy 2:** Conduct invasive species control operations to maintain natural community health.

**Strategy 3:** Introduce and enhance rare floral components of sand grassland communities with plant propagation, establishment and maintenance initiatives.

**Strategy 4:** Conduct management initiatives to enhance, maintain, and develop habitats for grassland and shrubland birds.

**Management Objective 2:** Provide recreational use of the area while managing natural communities and habitats.

**Strategy 1:** Support recreational uses such as geocaching, nature study, bird watching, hiking and nature photography.

**Strategy 2:** Provide a small game hunt program, as appropriate.

**Strategy 3:** Use natural community management strategies to provide small game hunting opportunities.

**Management Objective 3:** Promote the management of surrounding properties and nearby sand prairie remnants, through agreements and cooperative initiatives.

**Strategy 1:** Collaborate with surrounding landowners to expand management opportunities on adjacent lands.

**Strategy 2:** Manage Sand Prairie CA as one of a network of sand prairie remnants with active management strategies.

## **VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations**

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Considering aquatic resources if expansion of the area is possible

Sand prairies may support aquatic species of conservation concern; however, this sand prairie does not have any aquatic features due to its soil condition and geographic location.

**Management Objective 1:** Consider aquatic resources if acquisition of nearby areas are offered to the Missouri Department of Conservation (the Department).

## **VII. Public Use Management Considerations**

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Informing the public of opportunities available at these areas
- 2) Maintaining areas in a desirable condition

**Management Objective 1:** Maintain suitable public access and interface.

**Strategy 1:** Maintain signage and parking areas in accordance with Department policy.

**Strategy 2:** Promote Sand Prairie CA through varied outreach opportunities.

**Strategy 3:** Use Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center programming to promote the area; and to convey the importance of sand natural communities to Missouri's natural heritage.

## **VIII. Administrative Considerations**

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Ensuring boundaries are properly defined and signed
- 2) Evaluating land offered as additions to these areas

**Management Objective 1:** Ensure area boundaries are marked and maintained.

**Strategy 1:** Conduct regular boundary maintenance and routine signage posting and repair.

**Management Objective 2:** Consider area expansion where appropriate and feasible.

**Strategy 1:** Collaborate with adjoining interested landowners and agencies to develop area expansion possibilities.

### **Lands Proposed for Acquisition:**

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

## **MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE**

All strategies for this management plan are considered ongoing.

## APPENDICES

### Area Background:

Sand Prairie CA is located near Benton, Missouri just south of the Benton Hills' southern face. Sand Prairie CA is situated on the Blodgett Terrace, a remnant alluvial sand ridge in southeast Missouri. The area was purchased to protect the remaining sand grassland community present on the area; to provide an area to manage sand prairie natural communities; and to provide an area in public ownership to protect species of conservation concern. Today, Sand Prairie CA is a rich sand grassland area with rolling sand dunes, exposed sand blows, and a rich flora and fauna.

Sand Prairie CA is managed aggressively with prescribed fire and silvicultural practices. Natural community management strategies are utilized on the area to maintain biodiversity; i.e., to promote populations of species of conservation concern, plants and animals that are sand community obligates and small game populations.

Legal description: Township 28 North, Range 14E, Sections 10 and 15.

Area location: From Interstate 55, take Benton Exit 80 to Highway 77; turn southeast (left); continue on Highway 77 for approximately 2 miles; turn north (left) onto County Road 333; and continue approximately 2 miles to the area.

### Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Sand Grassland	200	100

### Public Input Summary:

The draft Sand Prairie Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period September 1-30, 2014. The Missouri Department of Conservation received no comments during this time.

### Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map of Sand Prairie Conservation Area

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